

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS ABUJA 000382

SIPDIS

STATE FOR DRL/PHD AND DRL/CRA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [ELAB](#) [KDEM](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: USG HUMAN RIGHTS STRATEGY IN NIGERIA

REF: STATE 13790

11. With the unprecedented 2001 level of communal violence and impending 2003 elections at all levels, in 2002 the U.S. Mission operated several programs addressing the institutional and legal shortcomings that lead to abuse of human rights in Nigeria.

12. USAID implemented a wide range of programs focusing on more open and accountable government and greater citizen participation in governance: U.S.-based NGOs and local civil society groups worked with state and national legislatures to improve legislative processes and increase opportunities for citizen input. Among the most notable results was a series of state-level laws banning female genital mutilation and other harmful traditional practices affecting women, as well as a national law proscribing violence against women. A judicial strengthening program provided training, equipment and expertise to three pilot courts to move cases more quickly through improved case management and case tracking, with the goals of reducing massive backlogs that lead to lengthy pre-trial detentions and restoring confidence in the judicial system in order to reduce recourse to extra-judicial options for redress of grievances. Extensive investment was also made in training and technical assistance to improve the capacity of election administration authorities to carry out upcoming local and national elections, and to enhance political parties, abilities to compete on issue-based platforms, promote women's participation and build better communications with their grassroots affiliates. USAID programs also worked with a wide range of civil society organizations, including advocacy training for women's groups and assistance for other groups to address the numerous communal and religious conflicts that have continued to occur.

13. In addition, PAS, vigorous International Visitors, Program, with input from several different sections within the Mission, included representatives from NGOs, the host government and civil society. The visitors participated in a wide range of programs, including conflict resolution, NGO management, empowerment of women, trafficking issues, and Islam in America.

14. INL started a train-the-trainers program on police reform in August, to improve the professionalism, responsibility and performance of the Nigerian police force. A major portion of the program focused on respect for human rights, covering such topics as excessive use of force and extra-judicial killings.

15. MPRI, a contractor mostly funded by USG FMF with GON contributions, has for the last three years assisted the Nigerian military to restructure itself to be more responsive to civil control and respect for human rights. ODC sponsored two expanded IMET seminars, by the Center for Civil Military Relations, and the Defense Institute of International Legal Studies. Both of these programs had time specifically dedicated to the respect of human rights within a military operation. All the IMET students who attended training in the United States were exposed to rule of law and human rights issues as a part of their training curriculum. Reports of military extra-judicial killings of civilians while performing policing roles in 2002 declined greatly from the previous year.

17. The Mission's political and economic sections regularly met with local, state, and federal officials to discuss human rights trends in policy-making and law enforcement, particularly regarding respect for integrity of the person, trafficking in persons, respect for civil liberties, refugees and internally displaced persons. They also worked closely with many civic and international NGOs on such issues as worker rights, religious freedom, prison conditions, and women, children's, and minorities' rights. The Embassy funded Democracy and Human Rights Fund projects totaling

\$60,000 on the issues of eradication of female genital
mutilation and reduction of corruption in the government.

JETER

JETER